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NEW WEBSITE PROVIDES LONG-TERM TRENDS ON MINNESOTA FAMILY WELL-BEING

— Challenges predate the current economic crisis —

(St. Paul, MN) - Much has been written in the past year about the struggles of average Minnesotans during the Great Recession. Often lost in the focus on the latest unemployment report or foreclosure rates are the longer-term trends: these economic shifts underlie the challenges to families trying to increase income, build wealth, or secure their assets.

Minnesota Data Trends (at www.MNData.org) is an effort to provide that long-term view, with easily accessible data on a number of key measures. Launched today, the web site provides information on trends in household *income*, *housing costs*, *access to health insurance*, and other key barometers of Minnesota families' well-being. The trends show that Minnesotans have faced challenges for years. For instance, the *jobs* section shows that the number of unemployed workers has exceeded Minnesota job openings since the second quarter of 2001.

The site is a ready resource for journalists, policy makers, nonprofit organizations, and interested members of the public. Each issue area provides at least one graph showing longer-term trends—charts anyone can download and reprint for free. The site includes data sources, brief summaries of the trends, and contact information for further details.

[Minnesota Data Trends](#) draws on the collective expertise of six statewide nonprofit advocacy organizations that focus on research. The partnership involves the [Affirmative Options Coalition](#), [Children's Defense Fund Minnesota](#), [JOBS NOW Coalition](#), [Minnesota Budget Project](#), [Minnesota Community Action Partnership](#), and [Minnesota Housing Partnership](#).

What is the purpose of this site?

- To provide reliable, baseline information to inform discussions about how public policies affect household stability and economic security across many areas. The goal is to shed light on long-term trends, not just the acute crisis.
- To focus attention on how multiple trends can combine to severely strain a family's budget. Any number of events can put a family into chaos: reduced work hours, an unexpected repair or health care bill, or the loss of child care.
- To create a directory of experts for members of the media and others doing research on these important issues.

The launch is only a beginning. The [Minnesota Data Trends](#) website will be updated as new information becomes available. Feedback is welcome on how the site can be expanded and improved.



Sample Summaries of Trend Information from the Minnesota Data Trends Web Site:

- Minnesota household income rose for nearly four decades from 1960 to 1999, but in the 2000s, buying power was flat to declining.
- The Great Recession cannot explain all the job loss in Minnesota. Between 1981 and 2000, the state gained an average of about 36,000 jobs per year, but between 2001 and 2009, Minnesota gained only 1,000 jobs annually.
- About 8 percent of Minnesota households were paying more than half their income for housing for 20 years from 1980 until 2000, but by 2008 nearly 13 percent had this level of cost burden.
- From 1991 to 2009, the number of people identified as homeless *more than tripled* in this state.
- Between 1999 and 2008, the number of Minnesotans receiving health insurance through their employers fell by nearly 240,000.

